

# The Star-Ledger

## **Group vaccinating those experiencing homelessness in new partnership with shelters**

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New Jersey doctors are now offering coronavirus vaccines to people struggling homelessness as part of an effort to assist those at high risk who also may lack medical care.

The Secaucus-based Riverside Medical Group announced Sunday a new partnership with shelters around North Jersey.

“The inequities that we’re seeing in vaccination administration is a problem, and we want to be part of the solution,” Zeyad Baker, a doctor and the group’s CEO, said in a statement.

Gov. Phil Murphy praised the cooperation.

“This partnership will undoubtedly help those most in need,” he said in a statement.

The organization will be working with nonprofits like Eva’s Village, which runs shelters and serves meals in Paterson.

New Jersey had more than 8,860 residents classified as homeless in 2019, according to a federal report. While that was a decrease from the previous year, the pandemic has exacerbated many of the problems that drive people into the streets.

Living in a homeless shelter puts one at risk of “severe COVID-19,” much in the same way nursing homes or prisons can pack together people who are already sick, according to New Jersey’s vaccination plan. Part of the questionnaire you fill out to schedule appointments asks if you’ve recently been homeless.

At the same time, registering online and traveling to vaccination sites can be high hurdles to clear.

Riverside is both helping residents sign up at shelters and in some cases providing shuttles to get people the Moderna Vaccine, said spokeswoman Stacey Goldberg.

The medical group will also be working with the nonprofit Eden Autism in Princeton, which helps children and adults with autism, according to a press release.